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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/585,762	08/22/2007	Francesc Santanach	016906-0529	7826

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EXAMINER

FERGUSON, MICHAEL P

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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12/29/2011

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/585,762

Applicant(s)

SANTANACH ET AL.

Examiner

MICHAEL P. FERGUSON

Art Unit

3679

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 September 2011.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on ____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
- 4) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 16-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 5a) Of the above claim(s) 20-23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16-19 and 24-31 is/are rejected.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 9) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 10) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 July 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of Species 1, Figures 1 and 2, claims 16-19 and 24-28, in the reply filed on March 4, 2009 is acknowledged.
2. Claims 20-23 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on March 4, 2009.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 16-18 and 24-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosoya (US 6,070,659) in view of Hayes et al. (US 6,866,300).

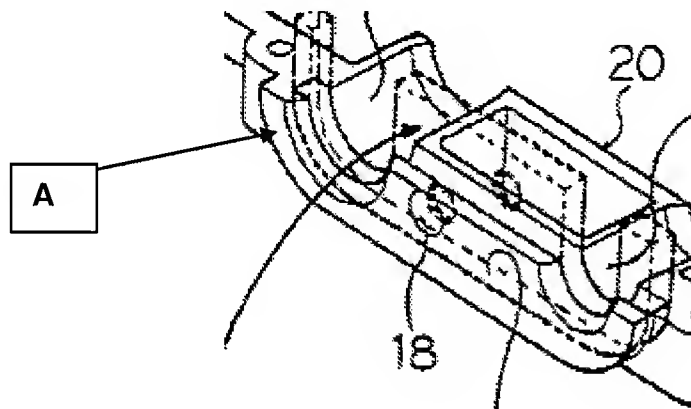
As to claim 16, Hosoya discloses a fixing device capable of use with a motor vehicle air-conditioning system including an evaporator, an expansion valve, and a plurality of lines, comprising:

a housing **4,5** configured to house at least the evaporator of the motor vehicle air-conditioning system in the housing, wherein the housing includes a flange **A** formed in a single piece with the housing (Figure 7 reprinted below with annotations), and

a positioning element **12** configured to position the lines **6,7** relative to each other, wherein the positioning element has a first set of two slots **13,14** configured to receive the lines,

wherein the flange **A** is arranged and shaped in accordance with the the positioning element such that the positioning element can be positioned on the housing in a rotationally secure manner,

wherein the positioning element is configured to be fitted and fixed **16,17** with an expansion valve in at least a twist-proof manner on the housing (Figures 7-8).



Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein the housing includes a flange, instead of including projections received within a second set of slots in the positioning element.

Hayes et al. teach a fixing device wherein a positioning element **130** includes projections **136** received within a set of slots **140** in a positioning element **132**; the interlockable projections and slots providing for secure interlocking between the two elements (Figure 8). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the fixing device disclosed by Hosoya wherein the housing includes projections, as taught by Hayes et al., received

Art Unit: 3679

within a second set of slots in the positioning element in order to provide for more secure interlocking between the positioning element and the housing.

Hosoya does not disclose any structural or functional significance as to the specific material of the positioning element.

The applicant is reminded that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use, wherein there is no structural or functional significance disclosed as to the specific material of an element, is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the fixing device disclosed by Hosoya wherein the positioning element is a sheet metal punched part, as Hosoya does not disclose any structural or functional significance as to the specific material of the positioning element, and as such selection of material is a design consideration within the skill of the art which would yield expected and predictable results.

As to claim 17, Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein the first set of slots **13,14** configured to receive the lines **6,7** are arranged parallel to each other in the positioning element **12** (Figure 8).

As to claim 18, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. discloses a fixing device wherein the second set of slots (**140** Hayes et al. Figure 9) fixes the positioning element **12** on the housing **4,5** (Hosoya Figure 8).

As to claim 24, Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein the fixing device is capable of having an expansion valve fit on an outer side of the housing **4,5** with respect to an evaporator (Figure 7).

As to claim 25, Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein at least one hole **16,17** is provided in the positioning element **12** to pass a screw through and the screw being capable of screwing into an expansion valve (Figure 8).

As to claim 26, Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein the housing **4,5** has a multi-part design, with a housing joint running in a direction transverse to a long axis of the positioning element **12** (Figure 7).

As to claim 27, Hosoya discloses a fixing device wherein an opening **10,11** is provided in the housing joint, wherein the opening is configured to have at least one of the lines **6,7** protrude through the opening, with the at least one line capable of being connected to an expansion valve (Figure 8).

As to claim 28, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. discloses a fixing device wherein the projection (**A** Hosoya Figure 8; **136** Hayes et al. Figure 8) extends from a surface of the housing (**4,5** Hosoya Figure 8) towards the positioning element **12**.

As to claim 29, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. discloses a fixing device wherein the second set of slots (**140** Hayes et al. Figure 8) are configured such that the second set of slots receives the projections (**136** Hayes et al. Figure 8) as the projections extend outwardly in a direction from the surface of the housing (**4,5** Hosoya Figure 8) towards the positioning element **12**.

As to claim 30, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. discloses a fixing device wherein the housing **4,5** comprises an opening **10,11** capable of receiving a plurality of lines **6,7** of an air-conditioning system through the opening, wherein the projections (**A** Hosoya Figure 8; **140** Hayes et al. Figure 8) of the housing are separate from and spaced apart from the opening.

As to claim 31, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. discloses a fixing device wherein the housing **4,5** and the projections (**A** Hosoya Figure 8; **140** Hayes et al. Figure 8) are formed by a single piece of molded plastic.

Applicant is reminded that **process limitations are given little patentable weight in product claims** since the patentability determination of product-by-process claims is based on the product itself, even though such claims are limited and defined by the process. See MPEP § 2113. “The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. “ In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695,698,USPQ 964,966 (Fed.Cir.1985). Accordingly, the process limitations of the housing and projections being injection-molded is given little patentable weight. All that is required of claim 31 is that the housing and projections are capable of being injection-molded.

1. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosoya in view of Hayes et al. as applied to claims 16 and 18 above, and further in view of Nozawa (US 4,589,265).

As to claim 19, Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. fails to disclose a fixing device wherein the second set of slots extends in a line toward each other at longitudinal ends of the positioning element.

Nozawa teaches a fixing device wherein a set of fixing projections **146** extend in a line toward each other at longitudinal ends of a positioning element **144**; the longitudinally opposing projections providing for secure fixation of the positioning element relative to a housing **122** (Figure 8). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the fixing device disclosed by Hosoya as modified by Hayes et al. wherein the projections and mating second set of slots are disposed at opposing longitudinal ends of the housing and positioning element, respectively, as taught by Nozawa in order to provide for secure fixation of the positioning element relative to the housing.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 16-19 and 24-31 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant's arguments, filed September 30, 2011, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 16-19 and 24-31 under 35 USC 103 in view of Diesel Kiki (JP 56-093316 U) in view of Orth (US 4,468,054) and Muller et al. (WO 03/081113) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Hosoya (US 6,070,659) in view of Hayes et al. (US 6,866,300).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL P. FERGUSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7081. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30am-3:00pm).

Art Unit: 3679

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571)272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MPF
12/23/11

/Michael P. Ferguson/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679